

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

VOLUME XXVII · NUMBER 3



JUNE · 1942

Published bimonthly by the Sierra Club, 220 Bush Street, San Francisco, California. Annual dues are \$4.00 (first year \$8.00), of which \$1.00 is for subscription to *Sierra Club Bulletin*. Entered as second-class matter at Post Office, San Francisco, under Act of March 3, 1879.

Contributions on subjects of interest to Sierra Club members are welcome, and should be sent to the Editorial Board.

Francis P. Farquhar, *Editor*; David R. Brower, *Associate Editor*; Weldon F. Heald, Charlotte Mauk, Barbara Norris, Harriet Parsons, Marion R. Parsons, Blanche Stallings.

Minutes of Directors' Meeting

The annual organization meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club was held at the club headquarters in San Francisco, Saturday, May 2, 1942. Present were directors Adams, Bernays, Brower, Clark, Colby, Dawson, Farquhar, Hildebrand, Huber, Kehrlein, Livermore, Starr. Directors Leonard and Robinson, who are serving in the United States Army, and Director Tappan, in the Navy, were absent and excused.

Mr. Starr called the meeting to order. The report of the Judges of Election was read, announcing that the following were elected on April 11, 1942, as directors of the Sierra Club for the ensuing year: Ansel Adams, Phil S. Bernays, David R. Brower, Lewis F. Clark, William E. Colby, Glen Dawson, Francis P. Farquhar, Joel H. Hildebrand, Walter L. Huber, Oliver Kehrlein, Richard M. Leonard, Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Bestor Robinson, Walter A. Starr, Francis D. Tappan.

As officers for the ensuing year the following were elected: Walter A. Starr, president; Bestor Robinson, vice-president; William E. Colby, secretary; Walter L. Huber, treasurer. Lewis F. Clark was elected the fifth member of the Executive Committee. Joseph N. LeConte was re-elected honorary president. Newton B. Drury was elected honorary vice-president, and the following were re-elected honorary vice-presidents: Horace M. Albright, François E. Matthes, Duncan McDuffie, J. Horace McFarland, John C. Merriam, Marion R. Parsons, Robert G. Sproul, Ray Lyman Wilbur, William H. Wright.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Board, held December 6, 1941, were approved as published in the December *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

Don M. Woods, Auguste Frugé, and Robert R. Schallenger, chairmen of the Loma Prieta, Mother Lode, and San Francisco Bay chapters, were present. Mr. Woods and Mr. Schallenger reported orally on chapter work; written reports from the Mother Lode, Riverside, and Southern California chapters were read by Mr. Colby.

Mr. Farquhar reported delay in getting together the material for the annual magazine number of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

Arthur H. Blake, Chairman of the High Sierra Trails Committee and of the Committee on Mountain Sheep, was present by invitation. Mr. Blake advised that there was very little to report now with respect to trail work in the California national parks and forests owing to the uncertainty of funds being available for this purpose, that he would prepare a brief article for the next bimonthly number of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

Concerning mountain sheep, Mr. Blake stated that it is again uncertain whether or not Norman Clyde will be in a position to make the count this year, as he is now engaged in searching for traces of army flyers lost over the Sierra last winter.

Coöperation with the National Park and U. S. Forest services and with the State Forestry Board in forest fire prevention was discussed and the matter was referred to the

High Sierra Trails Committee, it further being suggested that the chapters coöperate with the Forest Supervisors in their respective localities.

San Geronio Discussed

Full consideration was given to the proposal to open up the San Geronio Primitive Area and allow the construction of a road into and of buildings in the area for the purpose of facilitating its use for winter sports. Chester B. Morse, of the United States Forest Service, attended the meeting and told of the results of the general meeting held in Los Angeles at which all interested were given the opportunity to present their views. It was a distinct advantage to have the benefit of Mr. Morse's knowledge on the subject made available. After extended debate, the Board unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

1. That the existing standards of wilderness and primitive areas should be maintained, and that in the event it is determined, after full consideration, that any such area or a part thereof should be devoted to other uses which are incompatible with these standards, such areas or parts of areas should be excluded from the boundaries of the lands originally set aside for such primitive and wilderness purposes, rather than to have such areas remain within those boundaries. In the opinion of the Board it is not wise to retain such areas where their use might prove inconsistent with the general standards applicable to primitive and wilderness areas.

2. That, since it is apparent that none of the improvements outside the boundaries of the wilderness area desired to be made in the interests of additional winter sports use, such as the extending of the existing road to the area and the construction of buildings necessary to accommodate and care for visitors, can be made until after the end of the war, the entire question be left in abeyance and no

recommendation be made until there is some prospect of funds becoming available for such purposes, and until more is known of postwar wilderness requirements. (Dawson did not vote.)

3. That, if in the meantime any change in boundary should be made, the area excluded should not extend any farther than the lower part of the South Fork Meadows and that beyond that point the area should remain in its primitive condition.

Alfred E. Weiler reported on work being accomplished by the members of the Library Committee at weekly meetings, in caring for the books, periodicals, and other material received by the Club.

Lodges

Lewis F. Clark, Chairman of the Lodge Committee and of the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee, stated that Albert G. Duhme would again be the custodian at Parsons Memorial Lodge in Tuolumne Meadows, but that custodians for the LeConte Memorial and Shasta Alpine lodges had not yet been obtained. He reported that the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee plans to have a custodian at the Tappaan Lodge during the coming summer season so that members may more readily make use of the lodge. The lodge is not to be open to the public, but special group usage might be permitted, such special groups being there as guests of the club; the lodge will be available for any national emergency use. A limited work program is planned, but only for the purpose of completing one or two projects started last year. Mr. Clark advised that the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee was prepared to repay to the Sierra Club a portion of its loan from the Club. Mr. Clark extended to the directors an invitation for the fall meeting of the Board to be held at the Clair Tappaan Lodge over the Labor Day week end. A motion was passed accepting the report.

Outings

David R. Brower, as Acting Chairman of the Outing Committee in the absence of Richard M. Leonard, called attention to the Outing Committee's plans as announced in the recent bimonthly. The directors and the members of the Outing Committee had carefully considered the advisability of carrying on the outings this summer. Mr. Brower stated that Herbert L. Breed had consented to act as chairman of the Outing Committee for 1942, with Oliver Kehrlein as leader of the trips, and that therefore plans had been made for the Three-Camp, Base Camp, and Saddle trips, all of which would start from Mineral King; in addition one or more Burro Trips are planned if leadership is available.

In anticipation of reduced gross receipts from the outings, the Board voted to accept from the Outing Committee a proportionately reduced contribution toward club office expense.

Winter Sports

Mr. Brower reported also for the Winter Sports Committee. During the winter the committee sponsored several courses in ski mountaineering; classes were held in the Bay region, in southern California, in Sacramento, and at Norden. Members of the Winter Sports Committee prepared a *Manual of Ski Mountaineering*, which was published by the University of California Press. Compilation was begun the day after Pearl Harbor, and the book was off the press on February 26. He further reported that the Sierra Club's ski-mountaineering color film, "Skis to the Sky-Land," was now complete, the result of two winters' work by several photographers, a color duplicate of the film was immediately contemplated to permit wider distribution; the Visual Education Committee anticipates a restricted program of showings of both the ski and Kings Canyon films.

Other Reports

Mr. Brower, as Chairman of the Committee on Mountain Records and Place Names, reported that the chief work of the committee during the past year was the compilation for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* of another portion of the climber's guide, to cover the Evolution region and the Black Divide. The manuscript, written by Alan Hedden, was in the hands of the Editorial Board.

It was recommended that the chapters try to keep in touch with Sierra Club members who are on leave of absence while in the armed forces of the United States. It was suggested that additional copies of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* be printed and sent by the chapters to such Club members on leave, if requested by them.

A recommendation made by Ansel Adams that the Club assemble an exhibit of photographs to be circulated among the Army camps was approved by the Board, with Mr. Adams taking charge of the matter.

Permission was given the San Francisco Bay Chapter to send out a questionnaire to sponsors of Bay region residents who apply for Sierra Club membership.

Mr. Colby was authorized to request Professor Walter Mulford to represent the Sierra Club at a meeting called by the State Board of Forestry, to be held in Berkeley on May 8.

Mr. Colby read a letter from Edward B. Ballard, Executive Secretary of the National Parks Association, suggesting that Duncan McDuffie be appointed by the Sierra Club for re-election for another three-year term as a trustee representing the Sierra Club on the Board of Trustees of the National Parks Association. This appointment was authorized, and Mr. Colby was instructed to ascertain if this were agreeable to Mr. McDuffie and then to communicate with Mr. Ballard.

WM. E. COLBY, *Secretary*

The Accident on the Grand Teton

This account of the accidental death of William B. Rice and Clyde V. Nelson, Jr., while climbing the Grand Teton, is written in order that their many friends may know of the exact circumstances under which the accident occurred. There have been many conflicting stories printed about the accident; these were mostly suppositions.

Leaving base camp at 7:30 A. M. on June 19 for the Grand Teton, we climbed to the lower saddle between Grand and Middle Teton, roped together part way, cutting some steps. We went part way up the icy couloir on the Owen route, Rice and Nelson roped together, having to cut steps; Evelyn and I likewise roped together, but climbing up the rock wall beside the couloir. About 1:00 P. M. we left the Owen route opposite Wall Street ledge on the Exum route, going behind pinnacles and crossing a steep couloir in which we had to cut steps. At 2:00 P. M., at the bottom of the ledge, we left all ice axes but one and Rice chaged to keds, for climbing was mostly on rock from here on; Nelson had nailed boots. We climbed up the Exum route to a short, difficult ice chute at which point all four went on one rope. The weather was near freezing. About two pitches beyond this, Rice, who was leading, told me it was 4:30 P. M. and wondered if we should turn back. Although we still had five and one-half hours of daylight left, the weather was too cold to make climbing enjoyable and I said that we might as well go down.

However, as the summit was not over three hundred feet above us, Rice and Nelson decided that Evelyn and I should start slowly down, while they would go on up, leave a register given to Rice by the park ranger, and come down the route we were taking. They warned us not to get off the route. They took the 80 foot rope and we the 130, Nelson giving me the ice axe, thinking they would not need it the rest of the way up. After we

had climbed down a couple of pitches, I looked up and saw Nelson and heard him tell Rice, who was leading, to take up rope. That was the last we saw of them.

After going down two or three hundred feet, we decided to wait for them. We had waited about an hour and a half, the weather below freezing, when the thought occurred to me that they might go down the Owen route, which is the usual summer route and where ropes are not entirely necessary. By crossing a small arête part way down, they could very easily reach the Wall Street ledge, where we had left our ice axes, and meet us there. We reached the ledge and found that they had not been there, so I left Nelson's axe, we picked up ours, and went on down to the saddle to wait out of the wind. We passed through part of the couloir of the Owen route about 8:30 and reached the saddle at 9:25. We watched the mountain continuously for signs of them until 11:30, when we decided that they must have bivouacked until morning. The temperature was near zero at this time.

The next morning we thought they must have passed us while we dozed off after daylight and gone on down to base camp, so we started down at 9:30 A. M., arriving at base camp at 11:30. On finding that they had not been there, I was greatly alarmed, although I did not tell Evelyn of my fears, telling her that they must have waited for the weather to warm up before starting down.

At 2:00 P. M. I went up far enough to have a clear view of the saddle. Not seeing any signs of them or getting any response to calling, I started Evelyn down to Jenny Lake, telling her to ask the Park Service to send help as I was sure something had gone wrong and that they might be injured.

I remained at base camp and about 3:00 A. M. the next day (Sunday), Harold Rapp, Allyn Hanks, and Fred Brown arrived and

asked for details before going on. As I had not slept for two nights, they suggested I wait until daylight before starting back up the mountain. I loaned them our crampons. I arrived at the saddle at 11:15 A. M. and met Ranger Rapp, who told me they had just found the bodies and that they had both been instantly killed.

From the information that I received about the mountain from Harold Rapp and Bill Shand, both of whom had climbed the Grand Teton many times, and from my own association with Nelson and Rice on numerous mountaineering trips, knowing of their outstanding ability and knowledge of climbing technique and their regard for safety before conquest, I sincerely believe that the following is what happened.

They crossed the ridge below the summit and started down the Owen route. On reaching the couloir leading to the saddle, which was about 45° and full of snow, they roped together. The top of the couloir was approximately 1000 feet above the saddle. At some point before reaching the place where they were to cross and get their ice axes, either one or both slipped on the frozen snow, or a rolling rock may have knocked them off their feet, and roped together they slid all the way down the couloir, which was filled with many projecting rocks, and came to rest at the saddle—within 600 feet of the spot where we waited all night for them. They were not taking unnecessary chances or climbing after dark. They had only one flashlight with them, and it was still in the rucksack and was

in good condition; if they had been climbing after dark they would have been using it. I believe that they may have slipped before Evelyn and I reached the saddle and, if so, we passed within 100 feet of them, as a small pile of rock hid them from view from the route of our descent.

Bill Rice still had the register with him at the time of the accident. They did not have to go clear to the top before starting down the Owen route. I believe that they, too, had started down before reaching the summit, living up to the name of the excellent mountaineers that they were, and to the code of the club to which they belonged. Some simple misfortune overtook them, God alone knows how or why.

It was Bill Rice's wish that, if misfortune should ever overtake him while climbing, his body should be buried as near the scene as possible. His wishes were complied with. Services were held in the Chapel of the Transfiguration at Moose, Wyoming, and burial was on a green slope in Jackson, covered with pine trees and wild flowers, with the Tetons he loved so well standing majestically in full view on the horizon. Services were held in Van Nuys for Clyde Nelson and burial was high on a tree-covered slope in Forest Lawn.

Words will never tell how much they will be missed or express our sorrow for their loved ones. May their spirit of good manhood live forever, and their code of mountaineering be carried on by their comrades of the Sierra Club.

CHESTER L. ERRETT

Report of Superintendent Charles J. Smith Grand Teton National Park

The first mountaineering fatality in Grand Teton National Park for eight years occurred on the Grand Teton the night of Friday, June 19.

On that date a party of experienced moun-

taineers, all members of the Sierra Club, of California, established a base camp at the head of Garnet Canyon, intending to make several climbs and giving the time of their return to the Jenny Lake Museum as some

time Saturday night, June 20. This party consisted of Dr. Clyde V. Nelson, Jr., 6737 Vesper Avenue, Van Nuys, California, age 32; William Rice, 1530 Cotner Street, West Los Angeles, California, age 28, and Mr. and Mrs. Chester L. Errett, 2537 Outpost Drive, Hollywood, California, both around 30 years old. Mr. Rice had been in Grand Teton National Park before at different times and made several ascents of Grand Teton during 1941.

Late Friday night, on descending Grand Teton, probably around 9:30 or 10:00 P. M., Rice and Nelson evidently fell while traversing the upper side of a massive snow field and slid down the snow field to a ledge of rocks on the southwest slope of the mountain above the head of Cascade Creek, apparently being killed within a very short time after commencing the fall. The bodies were discovered by Chief Ranger Allyn F. Hanks and his rescue crew about 10:00 A. M. on Sunday, June 21. Details of the accident follow:

About 7:00 P. M. on Saturday, June 20, I received a telephone call from Jenny Lake stating that a lady wished to report the possibility of an accident on Grand Teton. This lady, who I afterwards learned was Mrs. Errett, stated that the party of four were ascending Grand Teton on Friday afternoon and at 4:30 P. M. had reached a point approximately 500 feet below the summit on the southeast face of the mountain. They had a conference and Mr. and Mrs. Errett decided to turn back as the hour was getting rather late, while Nelson and Rice decided to go on in an attempt to reach the summit, stating that if they reached the summit they would probably return by the traditional or Owens route on the west side of the mountain, otherwise they would return over the same route they had ascended. Mrs. Errett stated that she and her husband returned slowly and arrived at the big saddle between the Grand and Middle Teton peaks about 9:30 P. M., where they spent a miserable night as it was bitter cold, possibly about zero in

temperature and at an elevation of about 11,500 feet. They managed to crawl into a sleeping bag under the snow and ice which had been left there by Paul Petzoldt last fall.

Saturday morning they had heard nothing from the other two members of the party so they decided to descend to their base camp at the head of Garnet Canyon in the thought that possibly Rice and Nelson had descended during the night. On arriving at the base camp they saw no signs of the other members of the party, so Mr. Errett again went some distance towards Grand Teton but saw no indication of the two men and returned to the head of Garnet Canyon and at 5:00 P. M. Mrs. Errett started for headquarters to notify us of the possibility of accident, while Mr. Errett stayed at Garnet Canyon.

After this telephone conversation with Mrs. Errett, I went to Jenny Lake and interviewed her further and, becoming convinced that some sort of accident had occurred, Chief Ranger Hanks organized a party consisting of Harold Rapp, seasonal ranger, Fred Brown, fire lookout employee, and Tom Jump, our packer, all experienced mountaineers, and started by saddle and pack animal to investigate the affair. They went as far as they could by horse and then leaving the animals in charge of the packer, the three other members proceeded on foot, passing Errett's camp at about 3:30 A. M. and continuing up the mountain.

On the southwest slope of the mountain where the Owens route and the route up the southeast face fork they did considerable searching and could see in the snow field on the southwest side of the mountain evidence that objects of some sort had slid down the snow field, and after some period of searching the bodies were discovered as stated above. About this time the party was joined by Errett, who came up later and was much overcome by the tragedy.

The bodies were wrapped in canvas and Chief Ranger Hanks and his men worked all that day under terrible difficulties getting

the bodies down over vast snow fields to a point about a mile and one-half above where the horses had been left, and then they returned to headquarters for more materials and assistance, arriving at headquarters at 10:00 P. M. Sunday night, after being on the go continuously for twenty-four hours.

The next morning, with an additional man in the party, Mr. O. L. Davis, our permanent laborer, they went back to the bodies with two toboggans and two stretchers, moving the bodies down to the horses and they were then packed by mule to the foot of Glacier Trail, arriving there at 6:00 P. M., Monday, June 22. Transportation was waiting at the foot of the trail and the bodies were immediately loaded into a truck and taken to the coroner, Dr. Clinton Van Vleck, Jackson, Wyoming, where the bodies were viewed by the coroner's jury, the superintendent, and chief ranger and it was found, as stated above, that the nature of the injuries must have caused death within a very short time after the fall down the ice field commenced. Superintendent Smith and Chief Ranger Hanks testified at the inquest and were excused by the coroner at 9:30 P. M., June 22. When they re-

turned to Grand Teton National Park the verdict had not been arrived at as yet, of course, but there is no question of accidental death.

As stated above, these men were both experienced mountaineers and members of the Sierra Club and they evidently had descended over most of the bad places in the climb, the accident occurring approximately 1,000 feet below the summit while they were traversing the upper end of the snow field, as stated, where no particular mountaineering ability was necessary. It was probably around 10:00 at night of the longest day of the year and would have probably been twilight or possibly later. It is thought that the bitter cold and haste were contributing causes to the fatality. When found the two men were roped together in approved mountaineering style on an 80 foot rope and one was shod with hobnailed boots while the other had left his hobnailed boots and was shod with rubber soled "keds."

Chief Ranger Hanks and his group are to be highly commended for the efficient manner in which they performed this very arduous and necessary task.

Annual Photograph Exhibit

The annual photograph exhibit will be held as follows:

September 24 to October 6—Club headquarters, 1050 Mills Tower, 220 Bush Street, San Francisco.

October 12 to 22—Headquarters of the Southern California Chapter, 704 Auditorium Building, 427 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles.

Dates for other chapters will be announced later.

It is hoped that photographers on the 1942 Sierra Club outings will exhibit their albums,

for in each collection there are sure to be pictures of special interest not to be found elsewhere.

It has long been the custom for exhibitors to permit members of the Club to obtain prints at a slight margin above cost. For this purpose it is requested that each photograph be numbered and that the price be stated. Orders will be placed through the Club office and will be forwarded after the close of the exhibit.

During September and October photographs by Charles S. Webber will be on exhibit in the Club rooms.

Officers Needed for Arctic Service

ARMY AIR FORCES

HEADQUARTERS AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND
WASHINGTON

THE SECRETARY, SIERRA CLUB

Dear Sir:

It is contemplated that there will be a requirement for a considerable number of thoroughly experienced Arctic personnel of sufficient calibre to act as Commanding Officers of Advance bases or other equivalent duties. Specifications required of these men are outlined as follows:

- a. Excellent physical condition.
- b. At least 2 years of Arctic experience or equivalent.
- c. Sufficient educational background to be officer material.
- d. Good character with well-balanced temperament, initiative and resourcefulness.
- e. Proficiency in first-aid an asset.

f. Personnel experienced in either meteorology or radio operation are *particularly* desirable.

g. *All* applicants must be willing and anxious to volunteer for Arctic duty.

Will you please inform the members of your Club regarding the above, and suggest that any persons with the necessary experience and qualifications, who are anxious to volunteer, should send to me as soon as possible full details of their age, training, experience, and other qualifications.

The purpose of this letter is simply to make a preliminary survey of possible personnel for future requirements, and this point should be made clear to any of your members who may volunteer.

Please address mail to: Air Transport Command, Temporary T-7, Room 1836, Gravelly Pt., D. C.

Cordially yours,

JOHN F. STANWELL-FLETCHER
Captain, Air Corps

War Department Seeks Foreign Maps

Maps and map information covering all countries and areas not within the continental limits of the United States are wanted for the Army Map Library in Washington, D. C. Large-scale maps (1:500,000 or better), preferably of recent issuance, are particularly sought. Those who have such maps or aerial photographs of potential military value are requested to inform the Branch office.

Such data, if found useful, will be receipted for and returned shortly after processing. Information is sought also of the possible availability of maps now in the possession of those unlikely to learn otherwise of the need and value to the Government of such data. Address U. S. Army, Corps of Engineers, 74 New Montgomery Street, Room 546, San Francisco.